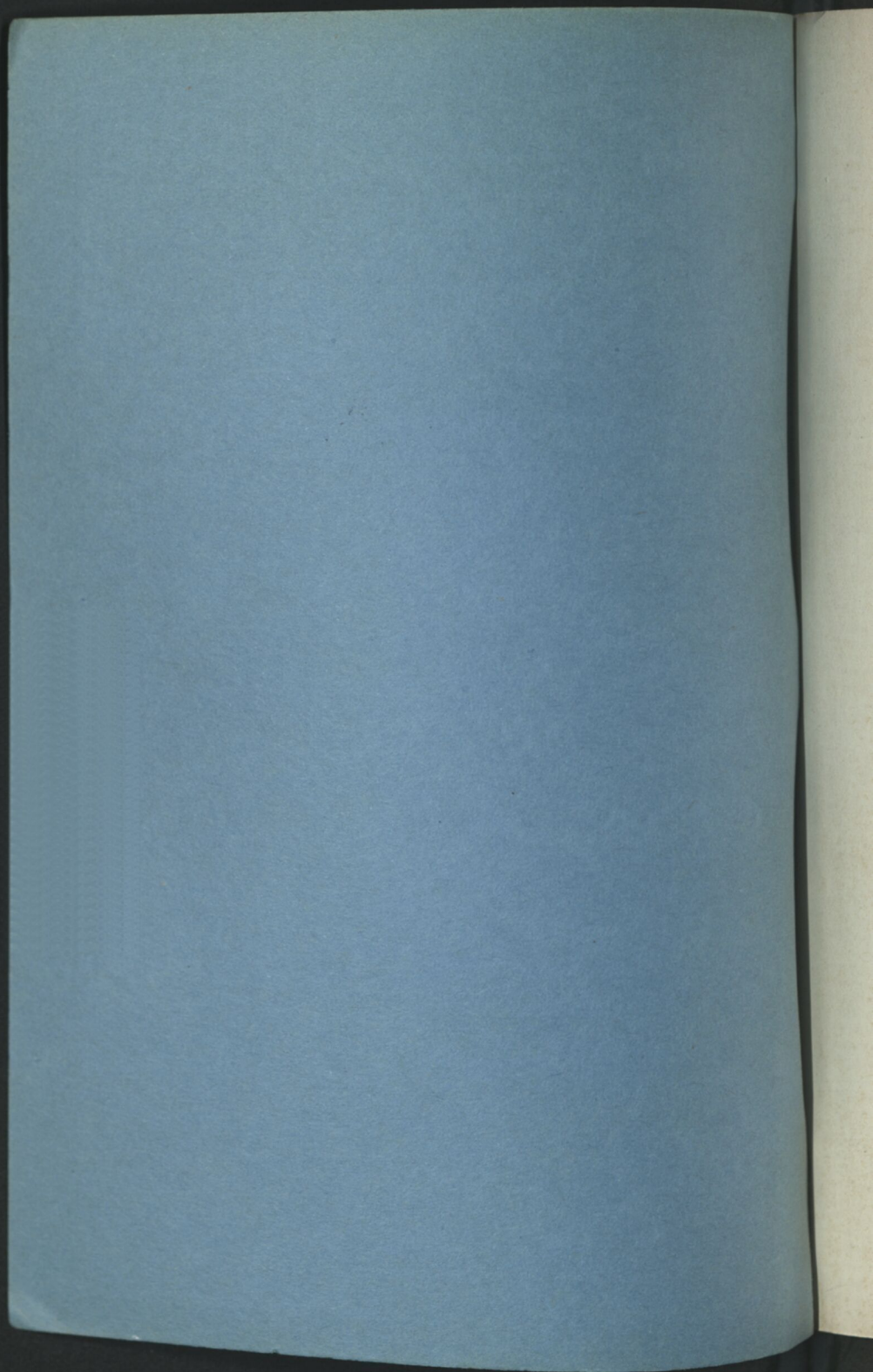
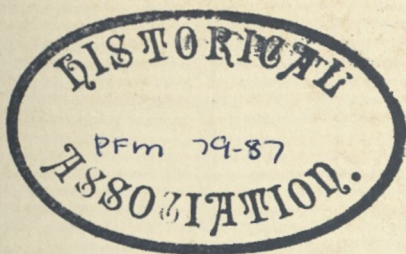


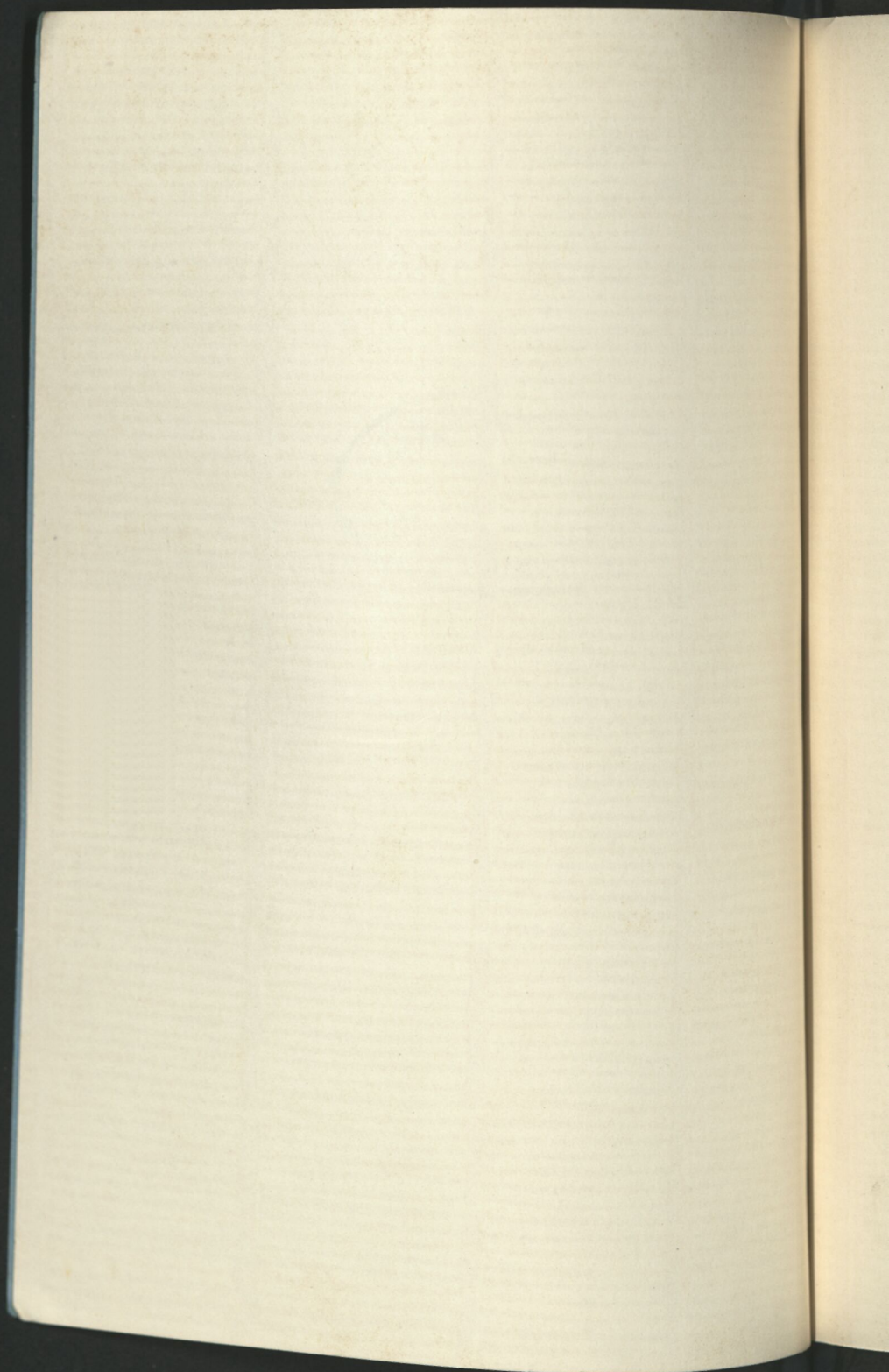
Nantucket
and
Other Verse



WILLIAM WELLS JORDAN







Marie M. Coffin

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and
Other Verse



WILLIAM WELLS JORDAN

HAVERFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

1930

To
E. V. J.
With grateful remembrance
of past years

I.
Island Verse

Nantucket

Far out to sea my happy island lies,
With mists and sunlight playing round its shore;
There waves break ever, and the wild gull cries,
And carefree winds are whistling evermore.

Its windswept moors hold wavelike dunes of sand,
Where pine and fern and bay perfume the air,
And in wide spaces by the fragrance fanned,
The burdened spirit loses all its care.

The quaint old town has many a narrow street,
Where houses gray with age and weather be,
And boatlined wharves of sheds where fishers meet,
And over all, the romance of the sea.

Spell of the past lies on the ancient town,
Its whaling fleet once sailed far o'er the world,
And homeward brought the sea's wealth and renown,
Each hailed with joy, as stormbeat sails were furled.

The old town sits and dreams of bygone days,
The island sleeps in peace on ocean's breast,
Far from the mainland's crowded cares and frays,
And there the worldworn toiler findeth rest.

There sweeping sunsets flame o'er moor and sea,
There stars and mystic moonlight fill the night,
There sunlit waters laugh and dance in glee,
The world lies past the sea line out of sight.

That isle's far voice keeps calling unto me
To leave the thronging world, life's rugged fight,
And sail far down blue stretches of the sea,
Where waits in calm the isle of my delight.

Surfside

Vast space of sky, and sea, and shore,
The vaulted blue o'erhead, a mighty sweep
Of gleaming sands where breakers roar,
To far horizon the heaving, boundless deep.

A silence, save for waves and seagull's cry,
A solitude scarce stirred by foot of man:
Where nature is triumphant, God is nigh,
Mortals but atoms on creation's span.

There spirits break their bonds and shout for glee,
Souls drink their fill of freedom and of peace,
There glorious winds blow spray from foamcapped sea,
Life's cares are lost, the world's harsh clamors cease.

But when the sea line far with mist is dimmed,
And shadows sweep the darkened ocean's face,
Awe fills the soul, eternity seems rimmed
Round life, and voices call from veiled space.

Changeless, yet ever changing, through the days
Of myriad years, majestic tides roll on,
God's mighty pictures greet the watchers' gaze,
Who hold the verge a moment, and are gone.

Fog

A long, low bank of sullen gray
Crouched on the sea line far away,
Biding its hour. As shades begin
It creeps to shore like a stealthy sin.
Silently stealing from crest to crest,
Quenching all gleam on the ocean's breast,
It shrouds the sea with a weird gray mist,
While sails swing loose, boats idly list,
Each craft shut in by a dripping pall
Through which ears strain for sudden call,
For far off siren's measured groan,
And clanging fog bell's hollow tone:
Then awesome silence. Yon dripping murk
Seems living, breathing, with shapes that lurk
Ready for swift and awful leap
To smite their prey to the soundless deep.

Creeping and sweeping it reaches shore,
Headlands and sands are seen no more;
It smothers the land with gray, dank cloud,
Wraps house and field in a deathlike shroud;
City and town are swathed at last
In drizzling folds which hold them fast;
Men are as shades in the misty street,
Blurred lights dim for travellers' feet.
Night long it drips from eaves and trees,
While fog horns moan over darkened seas,
And hearts that fear, and cannot sleep,
Lift prayers for those on the blinded deep.

Then morning comes, and an age old fight
Of the sun with this monster of the night,
Is waged through struggling gloom and gleam,
Till conquering sunlight reigns supreme;
The fog demon slinks from triumphant day
To his lair on the sea line far away.

The Island Wharves

I love the wharves,
Where many craft lie moored:
Sails furled, like birds at rest
After long flight, or spread,
Like those about to wing away,
A vision of far voyages;
Where odors of tar and cargoes
Mingle with salt sea air:
Where hurry of unloading
And loading ships makes stir
Of busy feet, shouts, sharp commands;
Where inbound sailors' cheery hails
Greet mates ashore.
There fishermen, deep ladened,
Bring the day's fare slowly in:
There dark, shell-crusted pilings,
Fringed with weed, reach down
Through depths of clear, green water,
And gulls, with flashing wings,
Battle and dive for food;
I love the wharves,
With all their savors of the sea.

Sea Rosemary

A tiny vase holding a faded spray,
Without, white winter's widespread snow:
Yet thro' that spray, eyes looking far away,
See summer skies, and shining seas that flow
Along a lowly shore of sand and sedge.
Where white wings flash in sunlit air,
And drowsy wavelets lap the edge
Of curving beach. There everywhere
Marsh land is gray green flushed with pink,
Rosemary, that grows beside the sea,
Swaying in fairy grace on ocean's brink,
Its softened hues a cloud of mystery.

Memories

Like ghosts, from dim and shadowed past
Emerging, now swiftly with sudden gleam,
Now lingering in slow and tender dream,
Scenes, faces, of days that sleep but last,
Arise from graves, on memory's screen are cast.
Across a gulf of years emotions stream
To greet them; joy, love, and longing seem
To clasp those memories rising from the vast
Of silence and of sleep. Far childhood's hours,
Visions of youth, then days of stress and strain:
Here sunlit fields, there valleys deep and lone,
Still, hallowed spots, and faces veiled in haze
Look back, like lights through mist and rain;
Life's later years hold all that we have known.

The Moors

Sweeping afar to the blue ocean's edge,
Free, open spaces ceiled with the sky,
Furrowed by footpaths through yellow sedge,
Furze, flowers, wild growths where breezes sigh:

God's out of doors,
The boundless, open moors.

Breath of earth's fragrance, breath of the sea,
Fern, bay, and juniper, odors of pine,
Salt tang of sea winds blown over the lea,
Mingled and sunkissed in air that is wine:

God's out of doors,
The fragrant, windswept moors.

Stillness that steals within, silence that heals
Cares, clamors, wounds of life, bids sorrows cease;
Out in God's open the deep calm that seals
On world weary spirits the touch of His peace:

God's out of doors,
The silent, peaceful moors.

Empty and lone they lie 'neath vaulted space,
Far seems the crowded world, no life is near,
Yet from the sky above bendeth a Face,
Souls know that One unseen is present here:

God's out of doors,
The empty, God filled moors.

The Island Gulls

Sailing through sunlit air,
Spirits released from care,
 On moveless wing:
Skimming the mistclad deep
When wildest surges leap,
 And storm winds sing.

Swirling in noisy flocks
Round the dark, tideworn docks,
 Warring for food:
Voyaging alone the vast,
Trist souls that mourn the past,
 In solitude.

Floating in buoyant grace
On the still waters' face,
 Spirits at rest:
Winging through fiercest gale
O'er seas that show no sail,
 On some far quest.

Lining the rocks and sands,
Slumb'ring, white-breasted bands,
 In sunlight warm:
Calling through mist and rain,
Plaint as of souls in pain
 Within the storm.

White spirits of the blue,
Glist'ning the long day through,
 In tireless flight:
Sweeping on wings that dare,
Through sun and storm they fare,
 Till falls the night.

Crusin' Round

"Joe, where you bound?"
"Oh, jest crusin' round."
'Twas his constant reply
When he came wandering by:
Had a queer, careless sound,
"Jest crusin' round."

Joe seemed in the game
Of real life without aim:
Didn't seem like a shirk,
Yet 'twas seldom he'd work,
And where'er he was found
Was "jest crusin' round."

Such a strange, restless soul,
Seemed seeking some goal
For which his heart pined
But never could find:
So he covered much ground,
"Jest crusin' round."

The streets of the town
He would drift up and down:
No one place in view,
As all people knew,
Who smiled at the sound
Of "jest crusin' round."

Then often he'd sail
If town had grown stale,
And from morning till night
With no purpose in sight:
For no port was he bound,
But "jest crusin' round."

Or he'd take to the moors,
On their wide, rolling floors,
Alone, tramping all day
In a strange, restless way:
Just covering the ground,
"Jest crusin' round."

His real purpose or thought
None successfully sought:
And they soon let it go
With a smile, "It's just Joe:
Who knows where he's bound?
He's 'jest crusin' round'."

Then the great world war came,
With its shame, blood, and flame,
And at once up spoke Joe,
"Well, I'm goin' to go:
Seems a queer callin' sound,
I'll go crusin' round."

So he went over there,
Where death filled the air:
It seemed passing strange,
But in Joe came a change,
For his goal he had found,
After long "crusin' round."

A real soldier was Joe,
Not a fear of the foe,
Worked hard when he should,
But whenever he could,
Toward the enemy's ground
He'd go "crusin' round."

The great fight was on
In the woods of Argonne:
Over the top now they go,
And the quickest was Joe:
"Them guns must be found,
I'll go 'crusin' round'."

Round the death storm he runs
To the nests of the guns:
All alone he beat back
One pit's fierce attack,
Stilled the guns' snapping sound:
He was "jest crusin' round."

With a wound in his breast
From that fight at the nest,
Toward his own line marched Joe
Driving six of the foe:
Not a thought of the wound
That he got "crusin' round."

Then from his own shattered band
Out on scarred No Man's Land,
Joe's heart heard a call,
Saw his own buddy fall,
And, in spite of his wound,
Again went "crusin' round."

Through a wild hail of shell,
How, none ever could tell,
To life, safety, once more
His loved buddy he bore:
Then he fell to the ground,
He'd been "crusin' round."

Aimless Joe, did they say,
On that black, bloody day?
Just a drifter from home,
Only wanting to roam,
Caring naught what he found,
"Jest crusin' round?"

With his face turning gray,
As his life ebbed away,
When the Padre came near,
Asked low, with a tear,
"Do you know where you're bound?"
Joe smiled at the sound,
Gasped, "Jest—crusin'—round,"
And was gone.

The Old Church Tower

High on the hill, above the homes of men,
The white church tower lifts its ancient head;
Its bell has rung for years past living ken,
To call the living, toll requiem for the dead.

Upon the timeworn streets it looketh down,
From every street eyes scan its clock's dim face
Marking the hours for the old sea town,
A faithful sentinel, steadfast in its place.

It watcheth toward the water and the land,
A beacon for all inbound ships, that see
With joy, that wellknown landmark stand
Where port is home, and pent up lives set free.

In years ago, upon its tower's height,
Those ships were sighted, cried, afar from shore;
Events by day, and dangers of the night,
The watchman's voice to listening townsmen bore.

His lantern swung at night upon the side
Where fires blazed, to guide the hurrying feet;
The hours, and weather fair or foul, he cried,
"All's well!" rang through the dark and silent street.

Still doth it stand, and still its bell doth call
To Sabbath worship, and gatherings of the week
For common welfare: a meeting house for all,
To guide the old town's life it still doth seek.

Tall sentinel of the past, it keepeth faith,
In later days, with those whose lives are new:
For even its form a message mutely saith,
Its tower points ever up toward heaven's blue.

The Little Beach at Monomoy

On the little beach at Monomoy
The sand is very white:
It glimmers through night shadows,
It gleams in morning light:
The green fields rise behind it,
And scattered houses stand,
Near the little beach at Monomoy
That weds the sea and land.

The little beach at Monomoy
Holds all the harbor view,
With white sails winging homeward
Like gulls across the blue,
And tangled wharves and sea front
Of a peaceful, gray old town:
That little beach at Monomoy
Where tides go up and down.

The little beach at Monomoy
Looks toward the harbor light,
And the open sea beyond it,
All through the lonely night:
Its sleepless watch it keepeth
Till starlight dies in dawn,
And the little beach at Monomoy
Lies waiting pale and wan.

But that little beach at Monomoy
When sunlight bathes its breast,
And silence broods above it,
Is made for peace and rest:
The white sand seems a sighing
To murmurs of the sea,
And the little beach at Monomoy
Holds memories for me.

Evening in the Harbor

'Tis evening in the harbor, the waters still
A lake of rose, from sunset on the hill.

Small fleecy clouds of color fleck the sky,
Beneath, in nameless beauty, the waters lie.

On busy wharves and shipping has fallen calm,
The hush on land and sea seems evening's psalm.

Homeward o'er sea of color, boats idly steal,
Ripples of rose light round each sluggish keel.

Late fishers, far up harbor, bring their fare,
Their distant motors throbbing on silent air.

Now shadows creep up south shore and Coatue,
And jealous dusk hides sky and waters' hue.

Night falls, lights gleam on sea and shore,
The passing dream of beauty comes no more.

But souls that catch the vision, drink their fill:
A mystic hour, whose spell haunts memory still.

Up Harbor

When the sun shines bright on dancing seas,
And our hearts hear nature's hail,
With favoring tide, and a quartering breeze,
'Tis the time for hoisting sail.

Up harbor they head, sailing one by one,
But off Coatue Point, like a flock
Of winging gulls shining white in the sun,
They look from the distant dock.

There is joy in wind on a spray wet face,
In the song of the rushing keel,
There is joy in the sport of a madcap race,
And the freedom that spirits feel.

Past Abram's Point they are flying fast,
Past Coatue's low green shore:
Sails drawing full on each creaking mast,
The fly standing straight from the fore.

Though tides may turn, or winds fall slack,
On the homeward sail, who cares?
Fighting wind and sea on the long drawn tack
Is joy to the heart that dares.

Quiet Quaise is passed, Polpis' deep set bay,
Past Pocomo Head they fly;
While the senses sing at the perfect day,
Not a cloud in the deep blue sky.

Now the last long reach of the upward sail,
Where on narrow strip of sands,
'Twixt sea and harbor, just a port of hail,
Little low Wauwinet stands.

"Bout ship!"-they fill on the homeward tack,
In the teeth of the wind and sea,
While the stays draw taut, and timbers crack,
And fight fills the heart with glee.

Into whistling winds now they bravely beat,
With the rail all awash on the lee,
Water coming aboard over deck and sheet,
Every stitch on the mast drawing free.

Down harbor they fly in the fading light,
Head seas round the bows afoam,
Till the long gray waterfront heaves in sight,
The port that our hearts call home.

Drifting slow into dock, at the wharf they lie,
To the skipper's "All hands ashore!"
But spirits look back with a deep drawn sigh,
That the day, and its joy, are o'er.

When your hope sinks low, and life looks gray,
And the joys of your spirit fail,
Just launch away, on a breezy, sunlit day,
For a long up harbor sail.

The Four Silver Leafs

In years agone we were young,
Full of strength, our shining leaves
Danced in the wind, our branches flung
Their shade like sheltering eaves.

Young lives grew up with our growth.
Branched forth like the living tree:
In Island soil we were rooted, both,
Where the old town sits by the sea.

Here together we lived and grew
We watching their joys and griefs,
Their passing gaze ever turned anew
To the four tall silver leafs.

Neath our shelter children played,
Heard song of the wind in our leaves,
Joyed over checkered web of shade
And sunlight that nature weaves.

When sunset flamed in the sky,
Men paused at the picture seen,
Our lofty forms up lifted high,
And dark on its crimson screen,

Together we grew toward age:
For us, scattered branches bare,
For them, scant strength, told turning page
In the book of life's toil and care.

We died, and our figures gaunt
Stand grouped in the empty field,
While thoughts of bygone beauty haunt
Old friends of the years now sealed.

Now when sunset flames in the west,
Like a prayer reaching up on high,
Our outflung branches lift their crest
Limned black on a burning sky.

'Sconset

The little town called 'Sconset
Faces toward the open sea,
Mighty beach of white sand shining,
Breakers always rolling free:
Where winds from off the water
Come all the way from Spain,
And cares are flung behind you,
Just joy and freedom reign:
There,
On the outer edge of nowhere,
Sits 'Sconset by the sea.

There is everything at 'Sconset,
Sea and moors beneath the blue,
Sailing, golf, and learned lectures,
Artists, actors' merry crew:
Where snug, tiny Ritz and Waldorf
Greet you on the narrow street,
Where, thro every golden summer,
Carefree, kindred spirits meet:
There,
On the outer edge of nowhere,
Sits 'Sconset by the sea.

There the moors and meadows mingle,
There the sands and water shine,
Ocean tints have nameless beauty,
Breath of sea and moors like wine;
There's a subtle charm to 'Sconset
Touching those who taste its life,
You'll come back to all its freedom,
Witchery, rest, from old earth's strife:
Where,
Bathed in sun and salt sea air,
On the outer edge of nowhere,
Sits 'Sconset by the sea.

Puttin' to Sea

Are you puttin' to sea? Come aboard with me,
For a cruise, and a salty sail
On the open sea, where the waves run free,
And the big wind will not fail.

We're heading outside on a turning tide,
Round the Point, in the channel's run.
Past the jetty's rocks, where gulls in flocks
Are at rest in the warming sun.

Past long harbor swell, and rocking buoy bell,
That tolls on the waves evermore,
We are racing away, through wind and spray,
On line with the long north shore.

Past its sandy bluff, now to loo'ard we luff,
And head for the far off rim,
Where we barely raise, in the low white haze,
Old Tuckernuck showing dim.

She lifts over waves, and dips in their graves,
With foam from her bow flying free:
There's life to a sail in a stiff, half-way gale,
When you're out on the open sea.

Shall we reef her down, run a risk to drown,
Let her pound her own way through?
Mighty wet aboard, where water has poured
Over deck, sail, skipper, and crew.

But we hold our way, through waves' rough play,
And wind whistling past in glee:
Just a little more run, just a little more fun,
And we'll make for our port by the sea.

Far Muskeget now shows, past Tuckernuck's nose,
But the sunlight's growing pale,
We must put her about while the light holds out,
For a long, hard, homeward sail.

So we beat away back, on a quick shifting tack,
With waves combing round our bow,
Till the south shore looms, where big surf booms,
And Madaket's to wind'ard now.

With blood all alive, as we still onward drive,
And spirits from care swept free,
What sport is so rare, to the hearts that dare,
As a sail on a windy sea?

Port at last draws near, the harbor shows clear
In the glow of the setting sun:
Past the jetties we glide, on swift turning tide,
And the cruise of the day is done.

When friends doubt, disagree, dark troubles you see,
And the sunshine of life grows pale,
Come aboard with me, for we're puttin' to sea,
For a cruise, and a salty sail.

The Old Windmill

On my hill I stand, silent and lone,
Looking far over town, sea, and moor:
Silent my wheel and grinding stone,
Silent my empty door.

On town, sea, and moor my far gaze
Has rested so many long years:
Naught left me but dreams of bygone days
Whose echo none living hears.

From those olden days, happy sound
Of wind in my outspread wings,
Of turning stones, when grists were ground,
Is the music that memory sings.

So many then thronged to my hill,
Sought me for their daily bread:
Many voices rang round the busy mill,
By me was the old town fed.

In the toil of those far away days,
The work of my life was done:
Now I silently rest in my olden place,
A servant whose race is run.

They have vanished in shadowing haze,
Happy years, whose task could not last:
Now only the curious come here to gaze
On a form of the outgrown past.

So I stand on my hill, still and lone,
Looking far over town, sea, and moor:
Silent my wheel and grinding stone,
Silent my empty door.

Brant Point Light

On uttermost tip of the harbor land,
Buttressed by rock on shelving sand,
Daring the waves' and stormwinds' might,
A pillar by day, and a flame by night,
The little Brant Point Light.

Dwarfed by Sankaty's lofty height,
And Great Point's far-seen shaft of white,
Yet across from the shoals of low Coatue
It sturdily stands as a beacon true,
The little Brant Point Light.

Years sweep on, and tides swirl nigh,
While countless ships go sailing by:
Where human currents flow out and in,
Where voyages end, and voyages begin,
The little Brant Point Light.

Silently watching as sails fly fast,
Watching the human tides stream past
Homeward, or out on the billowing deep,
Watching and shining, while others sleep,
The little Brant Point Light.

Past the jetty's mouth and harbor bar
It gleams at night like a guiding star:
Its shaft shows white in the sunlit day,
Rose flushed in the warmth of its sunset ray,
The little Brant Point Light.

Years sweep on, while tides flow free,
And souls sail forth to the shoreless sea:
Men come and go, and return no more,
But ever there shines on the harbor shore
The little Brant Point Light.

L'envoi:
For some rise high in the great world's strife,
Send light far out on the seas of life:
And some shine not o'er the leagues of foam,
But are harbor lights in the port called home.

II. Off Island Verse

The Pilgrims

Voyagers on wider seas than those they sailed,
Travelers to farther lands than distance veiled,
God sent them forth upon their noble quest;
Pilgrims to greater goals than held their view,
Builders of vaster empires than they knew,
Because God thro them wrought his own behest.

Pilgrims from pent-up lands to new world's main,
Builders of ways for millions in their train,
They came, unknowing, on mighty errands of God;
Founders of states to faith and freedom sworn,
Authors of liberties for nations yet unborn,
God sent their spirit through the earth abroad.

Voyagers whose ship has touched at every strand,
Pilgrims whose following grows from every land,
Theirs an immortal part in God's design;
Toilers on earth, eternal things they build,
Seekers of heaven, yet the world they filled
With ageless influence of the life divine.

Seekers of better country in the skies,
Finders of promised land no eye descries,
Their voyage is o'er, eternal haven won;
Captains of mankind's voyage to goals before,
Pilots of wide world's hopes to farthest shore,
The Pilgrims evermore are sailing on.

Ships of Tarshish

Ships of Tarshish the king did build
To sail for the land of gold:
With cheers, in sunlight, sails all filled,
They bore away 'mid hearts that thrilled,
The king's brave ships of old.

Black mists came, while the voyage was young,
And on reefs where great waves rolled,
As broken things were the brave ships flung,
Their quest was over, their voyage unsung,
They found not the land of gold.

Our hopes, our plans, we launch with joy,
All bound for a land of gold:
O, gallant ships naught can destroy,
Full-sailed, sunlit, past harbor buoy,
They sweep like those of old.

We watch them sail forth on life's main,
Then await their golden store:
We watch in sunlight, peer through rain,
But eyes grow dim, and wait in vain,
For wrecked on reefs of loss and pain,
Our ships return no more.

Yet who shall say 'tis of no avail,
That our wrecks only losses hold?
The soul grows strong through hopes that fail,
Clearer in darkness the Captain's hail,
Though with battered hull, and tattered sail,
We ourselves reach the Land of Gold.

The Dreamer

Behold, this dreamer cometh, but knowing not
The hidden, far-off meaning of his dreams,
Nor dipping path of pain, injustice, plot,
By which those strange, improbable gleams
Should reach reality. Yet was he true to God,
However stony, dark, unjust, the path he trod.

God guided, shaped his life thro many years,
Because, if wronged, he yet would faithful be,
And guides our lives, often thro flints and tears,
Till we, one day, our dreams' fulfillment see;
Yet is the crown reserved alone for those
Who cleave to Him midst failure, pain and foes.

Still do the multitudes of dreamers come,
With vision high of all that they would build,
Seldom foreseeing the bitter cost, and sum
Of toil and sorrow for the ends they willed;
Yet always, when the path of right is trod,
The truest realization has come from God.

True kingship is best reached by path of thorn,
God gives the vision, who'll follow to the end,
Fitted to reign thro suffering bravely borne,
Accepting humbly that which He shall send?
Our crown comes surely, when the fight is won,
And dreams fail never, when duty's nobly done!

Lincoln

Growth of new world frontier, and ruder life,
Strong, tall, like the mighty trees he felled,
Rough-hewn in figure, humor, rugged speech,
A giant's strength, a woman's tenderness,
A spirit swept by melancholy, laughter, love,
Fearless, yet patient, of clear-souled honesty,
Wresting from poverty, toil, his fuller life,
He climbed toward knowledge, ever seeking truth.
A dreamer, with widening gaze, deepening thought,
Surveying life's strange problems, rooted wrongs,
Hating all bondage, injustice, inhumanity,
And loving liberty, equality, his fellow men,
His native air was freedom, and in it grew
Convictions which governed all his noble life.
Slowly the Almighty shaped a man of might
Thro whom slavery was smitten, the Union saved,
And new note of freedom sounded thro the world.

At the nation's head, when evil war-clouds broke,
Four years he bore that nation on his heart,
Burden that bent his spirit, lined face and soul;
Sad-eyed he stood, peering thro thickening mists
To see the rightful path, while friends forsook,
Foes fought with obloquy, disasters followed fast;
Yet steadfast he stood thro every storm of hate,
Gaunt, brooding, praying, a man of sorrows, yet
With fitful play of humor 'cross clouds of war,
To save his reason, lift shadows from his soul.
Ever turning with quick compassions toward
Each call of need, and with goodwill for the foe,
He wished for peace, unity, the Union saved.
So fought he the fight of freedom, kept his course,
Till, at long last, hard won victory came, war died,
And, with great sigh of thankfulness, he knew
His task was done. Then crazed assassin's shot,
Weak vengeance, and his work was sealed with blood.
Great Martyr of his cause, yet willing to yield
His life for holy ends secured. Great Liberator,
Opening a path for freedom throughout the world.
Strange figure of destiny, around which grows,
Thro passing years, a wider homage, deeper love.
Of mankind in all the earth. He stands alone
In his own, sad, glorious place in history.

The Little Leaves of Springtime

The little leaves of Springtime
Are like lace-work on the sky,
They dance and laugh in sunlight
When winds come wandering by,
But exquisite is their beauty
When still evening draweth nigh,
And their fairy outline showeth
Like lacework on the sky.

The little leaves of Springtime,
Now in childhood of their day,
Soon will cast a full-grown shadow
Everywhere that branches sway:
Now in tender grace of childhood
Their young beauty charms the eye,
And at evening still their tracery
Is like lacework on the sky.

The little leaves of Springtime,
Over street and field and stream,
With floods of blossoms mingled
Down lane vistas like a dream,
Till sense is drunk with beauty,
And our hearts in wonder cry,
When little leaves of Springtime
Are like lacework on the sky.

Saint Valery

Upon the pier,
Far out from shore,
On wooden cross,
The Christ is lifted up:
That fishers launching forth
On boist'rous sea,
At land's last touch
May lift a prayer
For pardon, and for safety
On the deep.

And souls of men
Who sail life's veiled seas,
Yea, most, when setting forth
Upon that shadowed, shoreless
Ocean of Eternity,
Conscious of sin and need,
Reach up in yearning faith
To Him upon His Cross,
That, ere they part from earth,
They may have peace with God.

The House With the Golden Windows

I looked from my home at sunrise,
To the house on the distant hill,
Its windows shone with a splendor
That sent thro my heart a thrill.

How glorious to live forever,
The spirit within me cried,
In a house with such golden windows,
Whose shining would ever abide.

Then turning away from my own home
Toward the one with windows alight,
I followed a long, hard pathway
Till the day drew near to night.

From my home on the hill I journeyed,
Thro the valley that lay between,
To that house on the distant hilltop,
Whose windows wore golden sheen.

Its door at my knock swung open,
Swift words sought my tale to tell,
"In this house with the golden windows
I have wished to forever dwell."

Then hues of the shining sunset
Wide leagues of the valley fill,
And my host pointed over the distance
To my home on the farther hill.

Whose windows were lighted with glory:
"Why need you afar to roam?
The house with the golden windows,
You see, is the place called home."

The Soul of the Sea

There is a soul in the sea that is calling to me,
To be of itself a part:
'Tis spirit that steals thro his spirit who feels
The beat of its mighty heart.

There is a voice in the sea that is speaking to me,
Close to its breathing side,
Mystic words that are clear to the listening ear
Of those who in its love abide.

The moods of the sea tell their secrets to me,
Joy, anger, triumph, and pain:
'Tis a being that throbs with laughter and sobs
To all who its true nature gain.

There it reacheth in might beyond farthest sight,
A vast body pulsing with life:
Every movement, mood, hue, our souls ever knew,
Is shown in its song or its strife.

There is love of the sea whispering always in me,
Making me of itself a part:
No speech could unfold, what to me it has told,
Near the beat of its mighty heart.

The Leper

"Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean!"
Naught but this cry, from one who fell
In lowly pleading at the Saviour's feet.
With bitter need this sad and helpless soul
Sought refuge in the healing love of Christ;
Cast out by men, long hated, feared, and scorned,
Background of cruel years was in that cry.
An end of hope, endurance, had been reached,
And then he heard of One who healed all ills,
Even lepers cleansed, the pitying Christ.
To Him he runs, and falling at His feet,
Casts all his bitter burden on the Lord
In words revealing faith, yet lacking trust,
So long had he been wounded, shunned, of men:
A cry so yearning, piteous, staking all
On this last venture of a fainting soul,
"Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean!"

How swift the love, and outstretched hand
That touched him, him whom men had spurned,
Touched him in love and pity, a healing hand
Upon his loathsome flesh, and then a voice
Said quickly, gently, "I will: be thou clean!"
Straightway the cleansing came, and all
The years of sorrow, shame, and tears,
Fled into nothingness, and morning broke,
The new day of a healed and happy life.

Thought lingers on this scene, and memory turns
Back to the past, and all its sin-stained years,
So full of failure, wrong, and deeds that shame,
Purpose and thought unworthy, all the sin
That, like an inward leprosy, corrupts the life,
Keeps it from living likeness to the Lord.
Thus looking on our lives, our spirits bow,
And hearts cry out in shamed and humble plea,
Low at His feet Who heard the leper's prayer,
"Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean:
To Thee I bring the life I cannot cleanse,
Nor save for Thee, so sinful, weak, am I:
Cleanse Thou my past with pardon, fill my soul
With Thine own life divine, that giveth strength
To choose and keep the path of right,
To hate the evil, and to love the good:
That I may always live with Thee, and so
At last grow like Thy holy self in spirit,
Word, and deed; Lord, hear my prayer!"

Once more swift love, a love that understands,
Forgives, with healing power, comes from the Lord:
His touch is felt, His voice upon our ears
Says quickly, gently, "I will: be thou clean!"
And so once more the past is blotted out,
And morning breaks again, the shining dawn
Of the long new day of healed and happy life.

Lombardy Poplars

Like heavenward pointing fingers,
So slender, straight, and high,
Like prayers that rise in longing,
They climb toward the sky.

Their lofty heads keep waving
With grace in faintest wind,
And trembling leaves, that shiver
In fear, like one who sinned.

In darkness, thro their branches,
The wandering night winds sigh
As if a spirit were grieving,
It seems a soul's low cry.

On the distant hilltop standing
Like sentinels, steadfast, true,
Their serried rank is watching,
Outlined against the blue.

When evening flames in beauty,
Their figures lifted high,
Are etched on the western heaven,
Dark plumes on a rose-red sky.

From Kashmir far to Lombardy,
Overseas to a western home,
An air of orient mystery clothes
Their life, where'er they roam.

And they seem ever climbing upward,
The souls of these exiled trees,
That they may wave wistful greeting
To far kin across the seas.

White Horses

Shoreward they rush in their madness,
White manes streaming back, flying free,
Triumphant, aleap, in their gladness,
White steeds of the billowing sea.

Shoreward their serried ranks thunder,
Hoarse is their battle cry's roar:
Striving to tear earth asunder,
Their feet pound the echoing shore.

Shattered, defeated, and raging,
Backward in failure they flee:
Then anew their fierce battle waging,
White steeds of the billowing sea.

Give a cheer for their courage undying,
For a conflict that ends nevermore:
Old ocean's white cavalry flying
Toward death on a grim, rock-bound shore!

Interlaken

All day over narrow valley clouds hung low,
A darkened curtain, with never-ceasing rain,
Hiding all view of the eternal peaks of snow,
For which, in sorrow, eyes longing looked in vain.

At even, thro clouds came swiftly sudden rift,
And there, the Jungfrau's heaven piercing form
Roseflushed in afterglow, its mighty head did lift
For breathless moments, towering o'er the storm.

Speechless, men gazed with spirits stilled to awe,
At nameless, unearthly beauty, as of another world,
Thro cloud rift peering, a glimpse of heaven saw,
Then, o'er that vision, again cloud curtain furled.

Yet all the day those mountains of God had stood,
Gleaming in sun above earth's storm and strife,
Unseen, unrealized, by darkened, faithless mood,
Symbols of Almighty strength, and everlasting life!

Beside the Little Sea

Where waters shone, dawn winds blew free,
He stood and gazed, and peace flowed in
From hills, and sea, and God above,
On His soul toil worn in a world of sin,
Speaking to Him of the Father's love,
Beside the little sea.

Men thronged Him there, with hungry plea
For truth, hope, healing: body and soul
Needing a balm from the life above;
He gave them life, and made them whole,
Speaking to them of the Father's love,
Beside the little sea.

The waves still shine, dawn winds blow free,
But a sacred spell is on hills and shore:
He lingers there, who has gone above,
And His life, words, deeds, grow more and more,
Speaking to us of the Father's love,
Beside the little sea.

Birds in the Ivy

Where clustered ivy covers gray house wall,
The little birds find sheltered, happy home:
There all the day their voices chirp and call,
And there they sleep, where'er by day they roam.

'Tis joy to hear these little feathered friends
Twitter their cheer within their sheltered nest,
Their sense of safety, whatever storm portends,
Where under ivy and o'erhanging eaves they rest.

In summer one hears their drowsy bedtime talk,
In winter the chimney warms their wall of stone,
All year they nestle where foe nor fear can stalk,
Leaf-covered in comfort, which is theirs alone.

Dear God, who carest for smallest birds of air,
Beneath Thy shadowing providence shield us all,
Secure and trustful thro darkness, danger, care,
Like the happy birds 'neath ivy on the wall!

Armistice Day

1930

Again the day of visioned memory comes,
With beat of marching feet, the flags, the drums:
Memories of far-off fields where poppies blow,
Where quiet, white-crossed graves lie row on row:
Of darkened years when a world of cruel war
Marked history with its broadest, blood-red scar:
Ever since those years, the dead to us have cried,
Peace, peace, for sake of us who died!

Long since the roar of angry guns was stilled,
Earth drank the precious life-blood spilled:
Yet broken, burdened nations, near and far,
Still sweat 'neath long, hard aftermath of war,
While on their narrow borders, lying in wait,
Some seem preparing anew for storm of hate;
To this sore, torn world cry the dead, defied,
Peace, peace, for sake of us who died!

Great God of peace, whose Holy Spirit turns
The sinful hearts in which hot hatred burns,
Hear, on this sacrificial remembrance day,
The millions of many lands, who longing pray
That war shall no more crush a saddened earth,
Subdue man's wrath, bring lasting peace to birth:
That the cry of our brave dead be not denied,
Peace, peace, for sake of us who died!

Down Memory's Path

How dreaming hearts turn back, in later years,
To wander down the dusk of memory's path,
Its changing scenes of laughter, toil, and tears:
Of life's long harvest, 'tis the aftermath.

Keen joy, and sharper pain, are gone in part,
Time's tender touch has softened all the past:
Yet all life's story sleeps within the heart,
And wakes, as thought on silent years is cast.

Far childhood's home, with faces loved and lost,
Its trees, fields, flowers, familiar rooms, appears:
Its play and school, its joys of little cost,
Shines down the long, dim vista of the years.

Youth's larger hopes, its castles built on air,
Its joy in sport, glad zest for active life,
Boldly surveying a world that looketh fair:
Short, sunlit years, before life's serious strife.

Long years of manhood's struggle in the world,
Its burdens, problems, conquest, and defeat,
Its scars of battle, but banner never furled,
Yet humbler, stronger souls the future greet.

Here days that shine, there graves beside the road,
Strong friendship's ties, loved children at their play,
Hours when spirits staggered beneath the load:
All life's experiences line the onward way.

Then evening comes, life's twilight and its calm,
Given to thought, remembrance, toil laid aside:
For mercies past, souls sing their grateful psalm,
And as time fades, eternal things abide.

So dreaming hearts turn back, in later years,
To wander down the dusk of memory's path,
Its changing scenes of laughter, toil and tears:
Of life's long harvest, 'tis the aftermath.

III. College Verse

The Sphinx

Sky, sands, and sunlight dream
In heavy silence on Sahara's waste:
Thro vast gray distances no gleam
Of living thing is traced.
Yet not a vacant space,
For in the foreground riseth all alone,
Above the slumb'ring sea of sands, a face,
A carven face of stone.
The features fixed and dumb,
Yet yielding to the gaze, as if confessed,
Revealing lights and looks upon them come
Of something deep repressed.
The face, though stained and worn,
A dignity serene and tender shows,
And round the mouth a sweetness born
Of patience and repose.
Yet this not long remains,
Like desert shades, uncertain, wav'ring thro:
Mysterious of mien, as though she feigns
To disclose what she knew.
This look, was it a skill,
A craft, lost in a past whence ages roll?
Or does resisting rock with feeling thrill,
Is there within, a soul?
She holds a mystery,
A riddle shadowed centuries involve:
Which none save thro lost light of history
Can ever hope to solve.
How often, o'er the sand,
The toiling caravan crept 'neath her eyes,
That watched, across the barren land,
How many suns arise!
There, in the solitude
She sits, with dreaming eyes, and thinks,
Of what? What secret does she, waiting, brood,
The silent, age-old Sphinx?

Song of Youth

Mine is a song of the billowing sea,
With wave over wave rolling free, rolling free:
Where the dash and crash of the breakers' long roar
Sounds day and night on the echoing shore.

Mine is a song of the hurrying blast,
With its wild brave cry rushing past, rushing past:
Flinging spray in its way over wide swelling waves
That curl at its feet as its cowering slaves.

Mine is a song of life's mighty sea:
Though its waves, and its winds, raging be, raging be,
I am strong, life is long, come friend or come foe,
I shall keep on the crest of the surges, I know.

Song of Age

Waiting alone on a lonely shore,
Where the voice of the echoing past
Sounds in my ears evermore, evermore,
As the days go hurrying fast:
When light of the sunset laves
In gold all the azure sea,
I seem to see, o'er the western waves
The home that is to be:
See, far away on the purple rim,
The line of the Shadow Land, soft and dim.

Years have I walked by the lonely shore:
As days into nights are furled,
I watch them like ships evermore, evermore,
Going down to the underworld;
But since I have walked alone
There are times when I seem to see,
Beyond the waters' motion and moan,
The home that is to be:
See, far away on the purple rim,
The line of the Shadow Land, soft and dim.

In days ago, by the lonely shore,
Were others who walked with me:
Now lost to me here evermore, evermore,
Borne off on the restless sea;
One by one they drifted away
With their hands outstretched to me,
And the golden sunset lit their way
To the home that is to be:
Where, far away on the purple rim,
I think is the Shadow Land, soft and dim.

So I watch and wait by the lonely shore,
While the dim days come and go,
And changing tides evermore, evermore,
Roll on in their ceaseless flow;
But some night when the sunset laves
In gold all the azure sea,
And tide ebbs out toward the western waves,
The signal will come for me;
I shall sail far out to the purple rim,
Where waits the Shadow Land, soft and dim.

The Voice of the River

Have you listened ever
To the voice of the river,
As it hastens on forever
To the sea?

There's a soul-felt shiver
In the current's restless quiver,
And it cries, in mute endeavor,
"Come with me."

"Cease your waiting for the May,
Cease to walk your weary way,
Cease to struggle and to pray,
Come with me."

"'Twill leave but a little rift,
Forgotten soon, as new shapes lift,
But thou shalt surely onward drift
To the sea."

"Where, gleaming thro the dawn light gray,
High lifted o'er the watery way,
The morning portals of the day
Thou shalt see."

"And, thro the glistening gates ajar,
The fields of glory stretched afar:
There beams thy true life's natal star,
Come with me."

Shall I trust the cry
Of the river rushing by,
Will it bring me, by and by,
To the sea?

When its waters dark enfold,
How know I they will not hold
Evermore their blackness cold
Over me?

April

April is a naughty child,
Fretful, foolish, wayward, wild;
Nothing now on earth can chase
Away that frown which clouds her face.
See how, perverse, she hangs her head,
With every trace of brightness fled,
Her locks by spiteful breezes blown:
And now, of course, there comes adown
A perfect passion of tears and sighs—
Confound the child, how much she cries!

Aha! a change is taking place—
May be the dawn of saving grace.
The storm becomes a gentle shower,
It really lends her tearful power;
And see, 'mid slowly falling tears,
The glimmer of a smile appears,
Gleams thro, and flickers here and there,
Then breaks in radiance everywhere,
While gentle south wind's soothing balm
Breathes harmony with her dewy calm.
She turns, repentant, for our love,
Fresh, dainty, sweet, demure, by Jove,
That tender, tear-washed face alone
Would melt a statue's heart of stone.

Cape Elizabeth

The water ebbs out, and away, and down,
And sunken rocks of gray and brown
Glow in the evening light
Streaming across from the western red,
Where sea and sky, in glory spread,
The sun sinks out of sight.

Here high above, on a rocky point,
Whose head the storm waves oft anoint,
I watch the wonder wrought;
The matchless beauty, which over all
In perfect harmony seems to fall
Till every place has caught

Some gleam of glory for its own,
And all together, in perfect tone,
The finished picture make.
On shore dark firs, in evening's breeze,
Coming afar from the sunlit seas,
Their feathery branches shake.

While down an ever-widening strand
Of pebbly beach, and shining sand,
The waters, ebbing, go:
A soft, melodious measure they keep,
And seem to hush themselves to sleep
With gentle, rhythmic flow.

On the sea, each wavelet sinks to rest
With a gentle kiss on its foam-tipt crest,
From rays of the dying sun;
Like the quiet swell of a sleeper's breast
They rise and fall, while glow in the west
Fades, and the day is done.

Fast ebbing tide, swift dying day,
Have you to the watcher aught to say
Of the end that is to be,
When, through the dusk of life's twilight,
His spirit shall slip from mortal sight
On the sea of Eternity?

Last Day of Summer

A golden day, the last of summer-tide,
From all the covert places far and wide.
Has gathered up the prisoned sunshine sweet,
Sown there throughout the summer hours fleet,
And poured it at the coming autumn's feet,
Like gold before a bride.

How all the mellowed richness of the past
Seems on the surface of the broad earth cast:
Nor could rich, sun-steeped clusters of the vine
Pour forth to men a draught of yellow wine
Like this air, subtle, sweet, divine,
That floats throughout the vast.

Free is the sky from even a cloudlet's veil,
Azure the sea, and snow each fleeting sail,
So perfect all, it seems to us that He
Would make of light a rich, rare harmony,
And paint it on the walls of memory
In hues that cannot pale.

Ah, summer sweet, thou art the royal dead,
Fit is thy state with nature for thy bed,
Nor fairer could creation's morn have seen:
Self-deckt in beauty that proclaims thee queen,
This golden day, all radiant in its sheen,
A crown upon thy head!

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